Evolving the team, expanding skills for the future - SMU Libraries' skills development for the Library Specialists

Charleston Library Conference 2016
Vincent ONG, Hwee Ming LIM
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Singapore Management University (SMU)

- A young academic university
- 6 Schools - Business, Economics, Accounting, Information Systems, Law, Social Sciences and many research centers

SMU Libraries

- Li Ka Shing Library
- Kwa Geok Choo Law Library (opening in 2017)
Information Access and Resources

Electronic Resources, Licensing and Subscriptions
Collection and Metadata
Access Services

Department Head
Senior Manager
Senior Manager
Team lead
Team lead
Library Specialists
Library Specialists

SMU Libraries
### SMU Libraries Strategic Plan 2016-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Deliver high-quality, customer-focused services to support and synergize teaching, learning and research</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spaces</td>
<td>Foster a safe space that enriches and embodies the SMU experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>To be recognized as an integral part of the research, teaching and learning ecology of our community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture of Assessment</td>
<td>To enhance a culture of assessment in order to meet the needs of our community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Promote a dynamic communication with community, while enhancing engagement with stakeholders through outreach programmes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talent Management</td>
<td>Nurture an engaged and highly skilled work force that excels in a dynamic global environment</td>
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Culture of Assessment

Continuous Assessment & Improvement Initiative

SILOs

Cross-functional

Collaborative

End-to-end workflow
Talent management helps to

Nurture an engaged and highly skilled team that excels in a dynamic global environment
Catalysts of Change

- Future-driven
- Environment & system changes

New Law Library (opening in 2017)

New LMS, Alma

Legacy Silos
Background of Library Specialists

- Para-professionals
- Specialized services & Common shared services
- Legacy practices
New Reporting Lines & Core Responsibilities

**Electronic Resources, Licensing and Subscriptions**
- Library Specialist
  - Serials
  - Budget
  - Technical support
  - Receipt (Non-journals)
- Library Specialist
  - Orders
  - Claiming
  - Usage
- Library Specialist
  - Invoice
  - Usage
  - Course Readings
  - Course Pack

**Collection and Metadata**
- Library Specialist
  - Receipt
  - Processing
  - Invoice
  - Course Readings
- Library Specialist
  - ILL/DDS
  - Orders
  - License
- Library Specialist
  - Course Readings
  - Course Pack
  - License

**Access Services**
- Library Specialist
  - Access Services task
  - Course Pack
Getting started with Future Skills

Future skills is design to:

- Integration, unified processes and efficient workflows
- Upskilling to provide opportunities for new roles
- Support library-wide projects with faster deliverables
### Future Skills Execution and Transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff engagement</th>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>New roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team leads formation</td>
<td>New roles</td>
<td>Handover</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training and practice</td>
<td>New cross-functional teams</td>
<td>Relocation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2015</td>
<td>Sep - Dec</td>
<td>Jan - Mar</td>
<td>Apr - May</td>
<td>Jun 2016</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Pre-survey questions (competency + interest to develop skill)
- Transparency and one-to-one interview
- Consultative approach (Buy-in and resistance to change)
- Addressing fears/ insecurities
Future Skills Staff Engagement

- **Department head & staff engagement**
  - One-to-one interviews
  - Identifying areas of interest

- **Team leads feedback**
  - Feedback operational issues

- **Senior Managers & Work Distribution**
  - Act as advocates
  - Address ‘fears’ and debunk doubts
  - Plan and chart new roles
Job redesign: Who fits where?

• Business reasons
• Reporting lines to be clear
• Task lists for each new areas, job description
• Mapping staff to new position
• Final job placement of training
• Relocation
Pilot Run Feedback

- A little less chaos and ambiguity
- Toxic behaviors and attitudes
- Accountability and clear reporting lines
## Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Specialized</td>
<td>Shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems</td>
<td>Silos</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Vertical</td>
<td>Horizontal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Benefits

• Unlearn legacy practices
• Drive change through cross-functional teams
• Lean transformation
  • Relook process
  • Identify pain points to improve the processes
Professional Development of Library Specialists

- New job responsibilities & functional areas
- Breaking down boundaries & increase communication skills
- Expanded role and knowledge base
Evolved Library Specialists

- Powered-up and marketable CV
- Foster new culture of collaborative teamwork
- Increased autonomy, independent and increased confidence
- Flexible and adaptable, ready for volatile changes

Diagram:
- Libraries
  - Specialized Work
  - Acquisition (Physical)
    - Desk services
  - Serials
    - Technical support
    - Budget
    - Receipt (non-journals)
  - Evolved
    - Library Specialist
      - Serials acquisitions & renewal
      - Budget
      - Technical support
      - Receipt (Non-journals)
Recommendations

• **Identify gaps**
  • Issues arising from new roles/ work arrangement
    ➢ Prioritization and time management
    ➢ Different learning curves
    ➢ Demarcation lines and handoffs

• **Identify potential staff**
  ➢ Succession career planning
  ➢ Professional development
Conclusion

Outcomes
• Shifting from outputs to outcomes

Roles
• Moving from limited roles to collaborative capabilities

New skills
• Embracing new skills, roles and workflows

Cross-functional collaboration
• Team cohesiveness, participate end-to-end workflow

Workspace
• Co-locate the cross-functional groups
Evolution

“It is time to break down the silos, unite the clans and get to work”

- Eric Ries